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ACTION SCT-00

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-10	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AID-00	ARA-01	A-00
	CA-02	CCO-00	CG-00	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-01
	OASY-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00
	EUR-01	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	H-01	IMMC-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	INSE-00	L-01	ADS-00	MMP-00	M-00	NRCE-00	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OIS-01	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	P-00	SP-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	DRL-09	G-00	/034W			

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R 152000Z JUL 96
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2354
INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM//SCCC//
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 004244

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR ARA/BSC, S/CT, INR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PTER, PGOV, KCRM, AR

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SUBJECT: AMIA CASE: JUDGE ORDERS ARREST OF

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
DATE/CASE ID: 13 MAY 2008 200601030

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- PROVINCIAL POLICE OFFICERS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 4085

1. (U) SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PROTECT ACCORDINGLY.
2. (SBU) SUMMARY: FEDERAL JUDGE JUAN JOSE GALEANO ORDERED THE DETENTION OF 18 POLICE OFFICERS ON JULY 13 FOR INVESTIGATION OF POSSIBLE LINKS TO THE 1994 BOMBING OF THE ARGENTINE JEWISH MUTUAL ASSOCIATION (AMIA) IN BUENOS AIRES. THAT INCIDENT RESULTED IN THE DEATHS OF 86 AND THE WOUNDING OF MORE THAN 300 INDIVIDUALS. REPORTEDLY, FOUR OF THE DETAINED OFFICERS -- ALL OF WHOM WERE EITHER CURRENT OR FORMER MEMBERS OF THE BUENOS AIRES PROVINCIAL POLICE -- CAN BE TRACED TO THE POSSESSION OF THE RENAULT VAN USED IN THE ATTACK, MAKING THE SO-CALLED "LOCAL CONNECTION" WHICH JEWISH LEADERS HAVE CLAIMED FOR MORE THAN A YEAR WAS A NECESSARY LINK IN THE CHAIN OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE BOMBING. COMING JUST DAYS BEFORE THE EXPLOSION'S SECOND ANNIVERSARY ON JULY 18, THE ANNOUNCEMENT ONCE AGAIN IS RAISING QUESTIONS AS TO WHY PROGRESS IN SOLVING THE TERRORIST CASE SEEMS TO COME ONLY WHEN PUBLIC PRESSURE MOUNTS. END SUMMARY.
3. (U) JUDGE JUAN JOSE GALEANO, WHO HAS HEADED THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE AMIA BOMBING SINCE ITS INCEPTION, ORDERED ON JULY 13 THE ARRESTS OF 18 OFFICERS OF THE BUENOS AIRES PROVINCIAL POLICE. THE
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ARREST ORDER INCLUDED TWO COMMISSIONERS AND THREE SUBCOMMISSIONERS, ROUGHLY THE EQUIVALENT OF CAPTAINS AND LIEUTENANTS IN U.S. POLICE ORGANIZATIONS. IRONICALLY, ONE OF THOSE DETAINED IN THE AMIA INVESTIGATION HAD JUST THE NIGHT BEFORE BEEN HAILED AS A HERO FOR HIS PART IN THE CAPTURE OF A SUSPECT IN THE ASSAULT ON THE HOUSE OF SENATOR EDUARDO MENEM (REF). SUBCOMMISSIONER JOSE FERRARI HAD RECEIVED THREE GUNSHOTS IN THE CHEST, BUT THANKS TO HIS ANTI-BALLISTIC VEST, HIS LIFE HAD BEEN SPARED.

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FERRARI DISCLAIMED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE AMIA CASE WHEN QUESTIONED BY REPORTERS AFTER HIS SURRENDER BEFORE JUDGE GALEANO.

4. (U) THE REACTIONS OF AMIA LEADERS HAVE BEEN MIXED. WHILE NEWLY INSTALLED AMIA PRESIDENT OSCAR HANSMAN WAS CAUTIOUS IN PRAISING THE JUDGE'S LATEST WAVE OF ARRESTS, AMIA LAWYER LUIS DOBNIOWSKY WAS CONSIDERABLY MORE UPBEAT, SAYING THAT THIS WAS BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEARLY TWO YEARS OF THE INVESTIGATION. IT CAN NOW BE SHOWN, SAID DOBNIOWSKY, THAT POLICE OFFICERS RECEIVED THE VAN AFTER REPEAT AFTER IT WAS MODIFIED BY CARLOS TELLELDIN, AND JUST A WEEK BEFORE THE TERRORISTS USED IT AS THE VEHICLE FOR A MASSIVE BOMB. RUBEN BERAJA, HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF ARGENTINE JEWISH ASSOCIATIONS, BELIEVES THAT THE NEW ARRESTS WILL RESULT IN PRISON SENTENCES FOR SOME; HE HAS MAINTAINED FOR NEARLY A YEAR THAT FINDING THE CORRUPT POLICE INVOLVED WITH THE PROCUREMENT OF THE VAN WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SOLVE THE CASE. SKEPTICS NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT

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THE INDIVIDUALS WHO CARRIED OUT THE ATTACK HAD STILL NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED, AND IT MAY BE STILL TOO EARLY TO PREDICT THAT THE POLICE WHO PROCURED THE VAN ACTUALLY KNEW WHO THE ULTIMATE RECIPIENTS WERE. TWO FORMER POLICE OFFICERS WHO HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY SHOWN TO HAVE BEEN COLLABORATORS WITH CARLOS TELLELDIN, THE CHOP SHOP OPERATOR WHO WORKED IN THE STOLEN CAR RING, WERE ARRESTED DURING THE SWEEP.

5. (SBU) COMMENT: SOME SAY TIMING IS EVERYTHING, AND THE FACT THAT THESE ARRESTS OCCURRED ON THE EVE OF THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATTACK IS MORE THAN COINCIDENTAL TO MANY OBSERVERS. JEWISH LEADERS HAVE LONG MAINTAINED THAT PROGRESS SEEMS ONLY TO OCCUR IN THIS CASE WHEN THEY ARE ABLE TO MOUNT SUSTAINED PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT FOR ACTION. NOW, WITH THE JUDGE ASSERTING THAT THE LOCAL CONNECTION TO POLICE CAN BE PROVED IN COURT, THOSE LEADERS MAY FEEL VINDICATED FOR THE MOMENT. IT WILL TAKE CONSIDERABLY

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MORE TIME, HOWEVER, TO BRING THE INVESTIGATION TO
CLOSURE; THE JUDGE IS CALLING IT "ANOTHER STEP" ON THE
STAIRCASE TO RESOLUTION.

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